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Don Chalmers (ed) Genetic testing and the criminal law

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Genetic testing and the criminal law is a collection of national reports systematically describing the rules (standards or procedures), which are common when dealing with DNA tests in criminal investigations. The chapters, written by expert practitioners, judges, and researchers from (twelve) different countries, describe and thus compare the use of this testing on a national level, namely in investigations and trials in United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, Germany, New Zealand, Spain, South Africa, Canada (written in French), Italy, Finland, Argentina, and Denmark.

The various reports are based on the evaluation of a questionnaire, the answers to which were presented at the XVth Congress of the International Academy of Comparative Law in 1998.

The book provides valuable insights into the development of these jurisdictions and emphasizes the necessity of responding to scientific developments in a justifiable and

well-balanced fashion, taking into consideration the equilibrium that is to be maintained between civil liberties and the requirements of an effective investigation and the prosecution of offences.

An obvious drawback is the considerable time gap between both the filling out of the questionnaire and its presentation back in 1998 and its being publishing in 2005. To name two examples, German law has been amended three times since 1997 and the issue of the national DNA database is not reviewed at all. Thus, the book reflects the now historical *status quo* of 1998. The publication date is therefore, somewhat misleading.

All things taken into account, this book is nonetheless a valuable source of information for interested students, scholars, and practitioners of criminal law.

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